NATURAL NEWS

The Field Museum
Exploring
The Earth And Its
People

February 23, 1996

SPACE PLAN REVIEW

Monday, March 4, 1996 at 12:00 noon in Lecture Hall II

Laura Gates will review the long-term Space Plan for the Museum. The meeting is open to all interested staff.

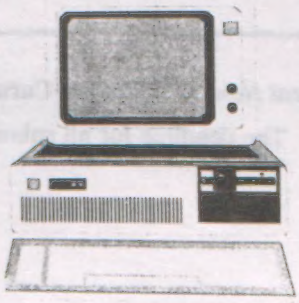
OPEN HOUSE
Computer Services and Biochemistry Lab

Wednesday, February 28 from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

COMPUTER SERVICES

Computer Services is charged with supporting and coordinating diverse computer related activities at Field Museum. Typical activities of computer services staff include planning, researching, recommending, installing, testing, trouble shooting and maintaining hardware and software for Museum systems and the networks that tie them together.

This past year we made significant progress toward decentralizing and distributing our computer resources, while expanding and segmenting our Ethernet network and upgrading our base of aging equipment including one multi-user system, many PCS, printers and other devices. These activities facilitated a higher level of information exchange and efficiency among various areas of the Museum, and contributed to information sharing with researchers and the public consistent with the Museum's goals and mission.



Current personnel in Computer Services include:

Jim Koeppl, Computer Systems Manager
Peter E. Lowther, Computer Systems Specialist
Dahao Wang, Computer Systems Specialist
Gregory Kotulski, Computer Operations Specialist

BIOCHEMISTRY LABORATORY

The Field Museum's Biochemistry Laboratory is a multi-user corefacility dedicated to the genetic analysis and preservation of the World'sbiodiversity. The lab serves as a research and training facility for thecuratorial staff, postdoctoral associates, undergraduate and graduatestudents who conduct basic research in molecular biology and evolution.The lab was first established in 1974. In 1989, the Field Museum recognized the significance of new molecular biology techniques and began a program to improve the Biochemistry Laboratory. A lab manager was hired, funds were supplied to develop new techniques and purchase new pieces of equipment, and an endowment fund was established to provide for maintenance of the lab. In 1993-1994, lab personnel were successful in obtaining external funding from the National Science Foundation for an initial lab renovation and expansion, along with the acquisition of a new technology (automated DNA sequencing). In 1995, the Field Museum hired six new Assistant Curators in Zoology and Botany who all use the lab and infused money into the lab for new equipment. The Field Museum Biochemistry Laboratory has probably the most diverse collection of evolutionary biologists and systematists of any institution in the world. Researchers in the lab are studying genetic diversity throughout the tree of life -- fungi, algae, plants, insects and other arthropods, reptiles and amphibians, mammals, and birds. They study genetic diversity at all taxonomic levels, from relationships among individuals and populations to classes and phyla of organisms.

Current personnel working in the Biochemistry Lab include:

Bill Ballard, Assistant Curator of Insects
Keith Barker, University of Chicago graduate student in Field Museum's Bird Division
John Bates, Assistant Curator of Birds
Amy Driskell, University of Chicago graduate student in Field Museum's Bird Division
Lisa Grismer, Laboratory Technician
Shannon Hackett, Assistant Curator of Birds
John Harshman, University of Chicago graduate student in Field Museum's Bird Division
Aleksa Kosinski (in conjunction with Greg Mueller), University of Illinois at Chicago undergraduate student in Field Museum's Botany Department
Mike Nedbal (in conjunction with John Flynn), Post-doctoral researcher in Field Museum's Geology Department
Link Olson, University of Chicago graduate student in Field Museum's Mammal Division
Tom Schulenberg, Field Museum Conservation and Environmental Programs
Joe Walsh, University of Chicago graduate student in Field Museum's Mammal Division

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The *Natural News* is edited by **Carolyn Klyce** in the President's Office. Articles may be submitted on floppy disk or email. The deadline for all submissions is Tuesday at noon. Printed on recycled paper.

THE FIELD MUSEUM: CONNECTING IN ITS SECOND CENTURY

It's here, and your very own copy, labeled with your name, and a letter from **Sandy Boyd,** should be in your hands within the week. Supervisors will be handing them out. Questions? Call **Carolyn Klyce** (x642).

LABEL WORKSHOP A SUCCESS!

The Chicago Museum Exhibitors' Group hosted its first-ever professional skills development workshop at The Field Museum on Saturday, February 17. **Eugene Dillenburg** (Exhibits) organized and hosted the event with help from two Chicago-area writers with ties to The Field Museum: **Mary Ann Williams and Nancy Goodman.**

Fourteen local museum professionals participated, mostly from smaller institutions. The sessions covered such topics as How Visitor Studies Informs Label Writing; The Nuts and Bolts of Label Development and Writing; and The Care and Feeding of Free Lancers; as well as a variety of activities. Comments afterwards were strongly favorable, as attendees planned to use their new skills at their own museums.

We extend sincerest thanks to all our colleagues who helped make this event a success: Security, Housekeeping, Visitor Services, Education, and Food Service.

We extend our deepest sympathies to **Joe Halik** on the passing of his father on February 18.

NOON BALLOON

The Noon Balloon presentation for Tuesday February 20, 1996 was delivered by **Dan Miller,** Research Assistant, Division of Fishes, Department of Zoology. Dan discussed his research on large scale patterns of morphological evolution in muricine gastropods. He documented a pattern of an increase in shell spine morphology during the past 65 my. Spines and other protuberances have traditionally been interpreted to function as an anti-predatation defense mechanism, which in turn implies an active directional component driving morphological change. Dan raised the possibility that the large scale pattern of increase in shell spines could also have arisen in a passive mode, independent of predation pressure. However, major new data sets will have to be developed before one can unambiguously determine which process or processes were responsible for producing the pattern of increased shell spines.

SECURITY SERVICES

1996 PARKING DECALS

To date only about half of the 1996 staff parking decals have been issued. All staff should obtain these decals as soon as possible. When the Lake Shore Drive project begins in March, and the north lot is restricted to Shedd and Field Museum staff only, access will be controlled from the west lot. The 1996 decal will then be the only decal accepted for entrance. Decals can be obtained in the Security Equipment office from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., or at other times by arrangement.

NEW SECURITY SUPERVISOR -- WELCOME!

The Security Services Department welcomes **Miriam Alleyne** as evening Shift Supervisor and the Security Services representative for Special Events. Miriam has six years of security supervisory experience as well as instructional experience. She has been certified to teach verbal intervention skills to deal with difficult people and to defuse potentially dangerous situations, through the Crisis Prevention Institute in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Miriam has also presented numerous classes to employees on personal protection and crime prevention. Please welcome her to the Museum staff.

My family would like to thank our many friends who have extended their condolences with the loss of my mother and **Nadine Kendra's** and **John Phillips'** grandmother. Your works of encouragement are much appreciated during our sorrowful time.

Sincerely, **Pat Phillips**